

# The (Silent) Room





# The Gleaner

## 2009-2010

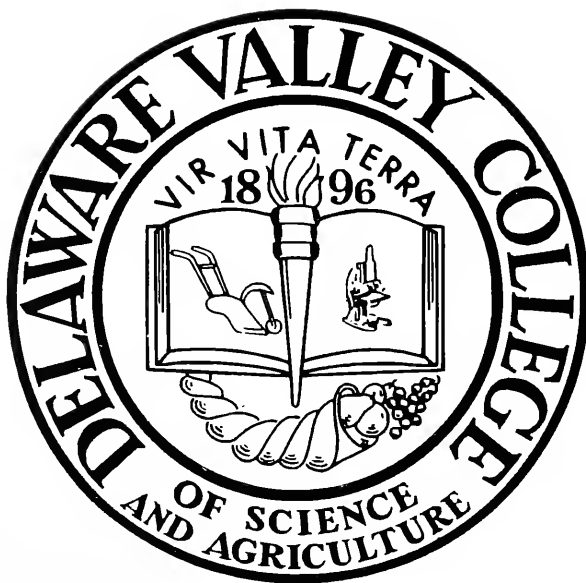
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*Art by Ashley Decker*

## *Hurricane*

*I can look into the future  
When I stand near you  
I'm proud of myself for giving in  
To the things we do  
I'm not big on promises  
But my mind is set  
I swear to God and you  
We won't be a regret  
I'm my absolute best  
You lift me so high  
Looking into your eyes  
Gives me every reason to try  
This is all so cheesy  
But I could care less  
My heart's beating so hard  
It could break through my chest  
You gave me 1,000 good reasons  
To finally give in  
And my mind is SCREAMING  
To let this begin*

*Nancy Davenport*

## AFTER THE RAIN

*Liquid rainberries  
Tiny droplets on fresh twig:  
Zenful nourishment.*

*Dr. Karen Schramm*



*Photo by Karen Schramm*

## WATERMARKS

*Quicksilver flight-path  
Swallows skimming Lake Archer  
Catch meals on the fly*

*Pebbles careless-tossed  
Cast concentric thought-patterns:  
Reflected musings*

*Silver fountain splash  
Sonically speaks contentment:  
Three-part harmony*

*From the porch at dusk:  
Fountain's diamond-bright Zen-sprays  
Black velvet backdrop*

*Dr. Karen Schramm*

## *Forget Me Not*

*This girl is just a girl.*

*She has pixie-like hiccups, and a loud hearty laugh.*

*If you fall down in front of her, she'll point and laugh.*

*After helping you up, of course.*

*She doesn't mess around with anything*

*She never, ever attempts.*

*Everything she does, she completes without second guess.*

*She never sings love songs,*

*Or shows others her art.*

*She has so many friends*

*Who are in love with her heart.*

*Despite all of these*

*She is just a girl.*

*She's a song left unsung,*

*Beautiful yet forgotten.*

*Samantha Kelly*





## Love

*Love... an emotion that is much more than an emotion. It is an overwhelming feeling that persists. It acts like a compass of sorts and when a man or woman meets that special someone the needle of that compass explodes into an unrelenting feeling of love and need for that other person. Sometimes the love is so great that special someone feels like "the one" that the person wants to be with for the rest of their life. But in this superficial world love is far from unanimous. When a man loves a woman, physical appearance plays a major role in how the woman feels about the man. Women say they want a man with feelings, a man who's nice and caring and sensitive, but their almost subconscious need to judge a man by their appearance negates that statement. So what does a man do when he loves a woman so much he can't stop thinking about her, but the woman doesn't give a straight answer when he tells her how he feels? She feels bad for him so she won't be honest. The man is left to continuously long for her, knowing by now she has forgotten his confession, but the man is way too shy to confess once again.*

*Adam Zimmerman*

# *Human Feelings*

*To have a human feeling  
Is like having a human heart;  
Without your human heart beating,  
In life you will fall apart.*

*To have a human feeling  
Is to have happiness in the mind;  
To go through life and see one rainbow  
Once in a lifetime.*

*To have sad or angry feelings  
Is like the taste of salty tears:  
To be alone in a world  
With everything to fear.*

*Human feelings based on you  
Can smell as sweet as a rose.  
Or sometimes when you are angry  
They can hurt like a bleeding nose.*

*Human feelings do not just happen to selected few,  
Human feelings are experienced by everyone --  
People -- like me and you.*

*These feelings happen in nature, in life, and even people too;  
But will you let these human feeling get the best of you?  
Will you let these feelings take up all of your time?  
Will you let these feelings poison your brilliant mind?*

*Human feelings were given to people by God;  
They were given right from the start.  
Many people use their minds to understand them,  
But rarely anyone uses their heart.*

*Human feelings are characterized by the heart,  
They can never be taken or sold.  
Over a period of time, people learn  
Human feelings will always be more valuable  
Than silver or gold.*

*Karlana L Brown*



## *Ode to the Answering Machine*

*Listen to this message  
When you get home  
If you get a chance  
Pick up the phone  
And call me back  
So we can talk  
As the hours pass  
By on the clock  
Yes, it's probably true  
You know my number and my name  
But I promise you  
I'll leave them just the same  
'Cause in a little time  
I hope you get back to me  
So remember this rhyme  
And know that I am waiting!*

*Kalina Desseaux*



## *Regret Your Past*

*Dropped in a new world,  
Sitting, left out to dry,  
My body moist as this lake I'm visualizing,  
Nothing but sweet, precious time to get me by,  
A student nonetheless.  
Standing out on her own  
No one to talk to or hang with,  
No, it seems I'm flying solo,  
I won't force people to love who I am,  
Be by myself is what I'll do.  
No "hey, look at me!" will I scream  
Sorry, I'll leave the decision to all of you.  
Don't worry, I'm not playing the race game,  
I understand it's hard to accept something new  
But just keep this in mind, people,  
I am a human, someone who is exactly like you,  
So be judgmental if you want, go ahead,  
Try, I dare you,  
But by the end of my time here  
You'll be saying to yourself: "Dang! I wish  
I could've known you!"*

*Kristen Weaver*

## Romance is All Wet

King has been married to Mary for seven years. For him, they have been comfortable years. He doesn't find anything missing in their relationship except maybe children. But his wife finds a big thing missing. She complains that he is the most unromantic person in the world. He does not disagree (out loud). He considers himself patient and honest, conscientious and reasonable. He has tried to be romantic for her, but without much success.

For example, there was their honeymoon. She had insisted on Hawaii and an exclusive hotel on one of the little islands. It was a lot more expensive than they could really afford, but he agreed. On the second day in Hawaii, he came back to their hotel after a solitary walk. The walk was just for something to do while she was taking one of her 45 minute showers. He saw her on the balcony. He waved to get her attention and then tried to sing to her with his hands clutched over his heart like in an old black and white movie. She walked back into the room shaking her head.

He has tried bringing her flowers for no particular reason, but she then speculates it must be because he feels guilty about something. He goes to movies she wants to see, those movies that are short on action and long on meaningful exchanges. But this only makes things worse because those guys on the screen certainly seem to understand romance; King looks quite inferior in comparison.

Mary has lately talked about a trial separation. She says she might want to have children, but she is not sure she wants to have them with him. She wonders what life would be like with someone who was truly romantic. King doesn't know what to do.

King works at a small manufacturing company. He is a salesman in a sales department of nine including the manager. He is never the top ranked sales person in any month, but he is usually second or third. He has a very unique selling style compared to the rest of the department. His manager calls him "father confessor". This is because when King is in front of a customer he usually doesn't do much talking. He listens. Newer customers are a little put off by this approach; they are much more familiar with the hard sell. But his old customers swear by King and wouldn't dream of moving their business from him.

He actually credits Mary for helping him develop this skill since he never can get many words in when Mary starts talking. He listens to the customer's problems related to his product and then will only sell them what they need to solve the problem, nothing unnecessary. His customers trust him like no other salesperson. Then, when they get to know him, they start telling him their non-work related problems. He listens politely and only speaks when he is invited to do so. He has learned that male customers don't like to go into much detail about their personal problems, but like to hear what their options are. His female customers just want someone to listen, if it is a relationship problem. The women really know what their answer is, but they need to talk through it out loud. So, if there is a pause with a female purchasing agent in the middle of describing a personal crisis, he will respond with something like: "What do you think you should do?" Then they are good for another ten minutes. He doesn't make many sales calls in a day, but he gets the highest sales per call of anybody. The president of the company says privately that he wishes he had a department full of Kings.

King's time spent in the office was always rather dull until Gwen was hired into customer service. Gwen brought life into the company as far as King was concerned. He first spoke to her when she came to his cubicle and demanded to know what he was doing to his customers. He was afraid something was wrong and he started to stand with a concerned look on his face, but she laughed and told him she was joking. That is when he noticed the bluest eyes he had ever seen. She was three or four years younger than King and was all of five feet tall. She had been a gymnast in her teens and the woman in duplicating told King that Gwen had gone to the Olympic trials and would have made the team except for a horrible knee injury. King noticed that Gwen walked with a slight limp. He asked her about his customers. She said, "I think you must drug them or something. I almost never hear from them and they never complain. Are you giving kickbacks or something?" Her tone was mocking and he could tell she wasn't serious. King said he just tried to listen to them and treat them with respect. Gwen left saying: "I wish my boyfriend did that."

After that, whenever he was in the office, King would stop by to see Gwen. At first it was for a minute or two, but gradually the visits extended. Gwen started to tell him things about her life and her boyfriend. He started to think he may have missed his calling as a priest. Gwen wasn't happy with her boyfriend and this one was just another in a string of disappointing relationships. She said she always fell for the pirate types.

Late in the spring, it is time for the first company outing of the year. Spouses and significant others are not invited; the purpose is to build teamwork and company spirit. And it is a chance for the president to have a day away from his wife and to play golf with the boys. The company rents out a country club. It is not a very ritzy club; it has nine holes and two tennis courts. The tradition is for the men to play golf and the women to play tennis.

On the morning of the outing it is raining. King goes to work expecting a cancellation; the forecast is for rain, sometimes heavy. However, at 10:30 the sun comes out and everyone heads for the club. King pulls into the parking lot at the same time Gwen is being dropped off by her boyfriend. He watches her have a very animated discussion and then she exits the car. Her boyfriend floors the accelerator and the tires squeal as he pulls away. Gwen watches the car as it leaves the parking lot. King gets out of his car and walks as quickly as he can to meet up with Gwen. She is still looking at the club exit. "What a jerk," she says softly. King is standing beside her now. "Are you ok?" She looks at him. "King. Yeah. He got mad at me for going to this thing and he smashed my guitar. I don't know how I keep picking them." She pauses. "It may still be ok," she says more to herself. King notices she has a tennis racquet in her hand. "Are you any good with that thing?" he says, nodding at the racquet. She looks down. "The last time I used it was to strain spaghetti," she says recovering her mood. "But, I don't think the competition is very good."

They walk to the clubhouse together. King says he hopes they can have a drink together after he finishes playing golf. Gwen walks over to the tennis courts. King walks to the pro shop and starts to feel trepidation. He is afraid he will repeat last year's debacle.

At last year's golf outing he had made a fool of himself. On one par five, with a pond in front of the green, he had (of course) hit into the pond with his seventh shot. Everyone else had already hit their ball on the green. He was so embarrassed he drove up to the pond and hopped out intending to drop a ball and then quickly hit it over the pond. But, he forgot to set the brake on the cart. As he went to get a

ball from his bag, the cart started to roll down the slope toward the pond. Instead of getting back in and stomping on the brake, he tried to grab the back of the cart. He wasn't quick or strong enough to stop it. The cart went into the pond submerging everything including his partner's clubs.

King insisted on going into the water and getting his partner's bag as well as his own. On the next tee, soaked from the waist down, his wet club slipped out of his hands on his backswing and the club, whirling like a propeller, almost hit another player in the foursome.

The company was billed nine hundred dollars by the golf course for dragging the cart out of the water and restoring it. King was afraid the money would come out of his salary, but the president of the company had such a good time telling the story to all the company's customers that he didn't have to pay.

This year the tournament is a scramble with big prizes for the best scoring teams. The foursomes were personally arranged by the president of the company and are posted on the clubhouse wall. When King looks at the pairings, he finds he is the odd man out, literally. There are eight foursomes to start and one single which is the last to go off. He sits in his lonely golf cart as one group after another leaves the first tee. His main consolation is that it will be much harder to make a fool of himself this year if he plays alone.

Finally, it is his turn to tee off. As he takes off the brake of the cart and prepares to drive to the tee, suddenly there is someone sitting next to him in the cart. It is Gwen. She is holding a small golf bag with four clubs in it. He looks at her in amazement. "I thought you were playing tennis," he says.

She looks at him with those exquisite blue eyes and shakes her head. "Courts are too wet. The rest of the girls have gone in to start drinking, but I'm not going to sit there and drink for five hours. My boyfriend is coming to get me around four. I thought I'd try golf till then. You don't mind me joining you do you?"

King shakes his head and asks if she has played before. "Nope," she says. "They gave me this kid's starter set because I'm so short. It can't be that hard, can it? I mean you don't have to hit the ball while it's moving. It stays in one spot until you hit it." Ok, King thinks.

At the tee, King tries to tell Gwen everything he knows about golf in thirty seconds. He tells her to keep her head down, keep her left arm straight, coil her body on the back swing, don't hit over the top, and to clear out her left side. Gwen just shakes her head. "I'll never remember all of that," she says. She puts her ball on a tee and with a backswing no higher than her waist, she hits the ball straight down the middle of the fairway; it is a low 150 yard shot with just the hint of a slice. "That is fantastic," gushes King. "Three years of field hockey," Gwen replies.

King does not fare as well on his tee shot or any other shot on the first hole. Gwen has a seven and King has at least twelve. He is mortified. On the way to the second hole, Gwen asks if he minds some advice. King shakes his head. "You are way too tense. I can see it in your shoulders." When he stops the cart, Gwen demonstrates how he can rotate his head to relax his shoulders. This time when he tees off he makes one of the best shots in his life, hitting the ball far down the fairway.

The next six holes are dreamlike. He and Gwen talk and laugh about work and customers. The less he thinks about golf, the better he plays. But, as they finish the sixth hole, King notices the wind is coming up and the sky is getting very cloudy again. He hopes the rain will hold off for three more holes with Gwen.

On the seventh hole, Gwen tells King that she is going to give her boyfriend one last chance and if it doesn't work out she is going to go back to the West coast. She says there is nothing for her here and no one will miss her if she leaves. King says he would miss her. Gwen gives him a warm smile and says that King might be the only thing she would miss if she moved back home.

They finish the seventh hole and walk to the golf cart. The clouds are very dark and the wind is blowing much harder now. Drops of rain start to fall and are becoming much more numerous by the second. On this hole, they are at the farthest point from the clubhouse and they would never make it back without getting drenched. Next to the eighth tee is a large evergreen whose branches have been cut off for the first six feet from the ground. King drives the cart next to the tree. He is going to explain his idea to Gwen, but she is way ahead of him as she hops out of the cart and darts under the branches. He gets out of the cart and follows her. "The sky is blue on the horizon", he says. "It will probably pass over in a couple of minutes." She nods and looks out over the golf course. It is green and wet and reminds her of hundreds of happy days she spent growing up in Oregon.

It is raining much harder now. If there is lightning, this tall and solitary tree is about the most unsafe place to be. King listens for thunder, but there is just the roar of the rain like a waterfall. Under this dense tree, occasional large droplets of water come down on them. One strikes Gwen on her back and she shivers. King is standing behind her. With a little hesitation, he moves closer to her and tries to surround her like a coat. His hands clasp and hover above her stomach and their bodies are barely touching. He just wants to protect her from the rain and the chill. She stiffens and King expects her to pull away. But in a couple of seconds she relaxes and leans back against him. He feels his temperature go up five, ten, a hundred degrees. Gwen starts to sing in a soft voice. The music has a sing song melody. The words he can barely make out over the sounds of the deluge. The lyrics sound like: "Rain, rain, go away, come again some other day". She has a beautiful voice. Her head is now resting on his shoulder. Her hair smells of strawberries and vanilla. He feels his body surging with emotion; his knees are trembling. He doesn't know what to do. He wants to spin her around and kiss her in one motion, but he is afraid she won't kiss him back. He remembers he is married. He remembers she said her boyfriend would be waiting for her in the parking lot; that is where she will surely go once the rain stops. Maybe he should turn her gently around and see if there is some hint in her eyes as to what she is feeling. But, he has been misinterpreting females and their signals since he was fourteen. Maybe he should say something to her, but what? King is in agony and it is a delicious agony. If it stops raining, Gwen will leave. King is sure he will never have a chance like this again, but he is almost paralyzed. His hands, interlocked and resting on her waist, now find her hands folded on top. Gwen starts to rub her fingers gently back and forth on top of his hands. He feels his heart pounding blood to his head. And suddenly he knows. This is romance. And being romantic is hoping the rain never stops.

Larry Stelmach



*At the Top of the Mountain*

*The day is moving slowly and we are feeling low  
So we climb up to that mountain side  
Where we always seem to go*

*We venture out too often, always seeking pleasure  
But can it really be our fault  
That the cliffs are filled with treasure*

*Now being mountain men is part of our reputation  
But the view up high is beautiful  
And the climb is our recreation.*

*Your legs were young once too, where else can you throw the blame  
Climbing is in our blood  
You played this very game.*

*John Giusti*



*Photo by Mary Boyle*

*To the Happy Couple  
They say marriage is like a flower:  
A seed of trust is planted and it grows---  
As long as love and hope remain,  
Good fortune, the flower of marriage bestows.*

*To forever love, honor, and cherish each other  
Is more valuable than silver or gold;  
To both bride and groom treasure each moment,  
Let your new life filled with happiness unfold.*

*Karlana L. Brown*



## *Secrets*

*Sweet words of sin, fall silently on my lips  
As I gaze into your steel blue eyes  
A secret we keep  
but my heart aches every time you touch me  
I yearn to whisper those words  
That I dare not speak  
of what could be...  
Your gaze pierces me so deep  
as you hold me in your strong arms  
They musky scent of you surrounds me  
as we embrace in this forbidden kiss  
That I will keep locked away in my hidden heart*

*Jennifer Madden*

*Photo by Rachael Gentzler*

## *Don't Wake Me*

*Wandering around these lonely roads,  
deserted and empty is all that it seems.  
The sky turns to gray and I shiver with cold,  
but still it all feels like a dream.  
Carving this road of reminiscence,  
I'm reminded of where I am.  
And suddenly I'm trapped in memories  
and I stumble where I stand.  
I relentlessly try to block them out,  
but they never go away.  
I swear I've tried to let you go,  
but in my mind you stay  
Familiar dread spreads slowly,  
shivers seeping through my core.  
Because these paths I walk along  
are ones we've roamed before.  
My feet move without consent,  
dragging me into this memory.  
I hear your voice, but it's just the wind,  
and God, it's messing with me.  
I'm reminded of the way you laughed,  
again my heart is torn.  
I had no fear of cold or ice,  
your smile kept me warm.  
I can't escape these times we've had,  
the way things used to be,  
Now all of these nostalgic streets  
are simply haunting me.  
I see us walking down the road,  
like ghosts of times we've shared.  
Arm and arm we walk along,  
it's more than I can bear.  
We look so free, we're smiling,  
I've been happy in this life.  
I shudder as I realize,  
I can't remember what that felt like.  
My shaking breaths are shallow,  
taking in the frigid air.  
My eyes burn with unshed tears,  
no words describe this despair.  
The ghost of me slowly fades away,  
and fear freezes me in place.  
I'm afraid and lost and I want to leave,*

*until I see your face.*

*Eyes that I've adored before  
are all that I can see.  
Upon a face I've loved before,  
the most beautiful thing to me.  
I can barely breathe at all right now,  
as my fists clench at my sides,  
I beg my mind, don't torture me,  
but it doesn't hear my cries.  
You're close to me, I feel you,  
and I can't move, I'm far too stunned.  
I'm fighting with my sanity,  
but there's nowhere left to run.  
I heave a sob and breathe you in,  
I know that I'm coming undone.  
I remind myself that I'm alone,  
but I'm already too far gone.*

*I feel your arms around me,  
so secure, I feel your heat.  
I've missed you for forever,  
but please don't toy with my defeat.  
Those tears, they fall completely.  
Unabashed, I can't pretend,  
that I don't want you hold you too,  
I can't take this loss again.  
You've always had my heart, you know.  
Love is something I can't explain.  
I've lost you once already,  
I'd rather die than feel that pain.*

*I feel your kiss and no longer care,  
what makes sense in this mystery.  
Because you're safe here in my arms,  
and you're all I'll ever need.*

*If, by chance, this isn't real,  
then I'll pray this final plea;  
if I am asleep, and this is a dream,  
God, please, don't ever wake me.*

*Jen Forgash*

# ***River of Music***

## ***River of Music***

***From a river strong with currents,  
I am pulled in deep.  
The cold water is almost refreshing.***

***My body sways with every beat,  
the river and I are one.  
The movements, my own however  
controlled by the mighty river.***

***You grab my hand, a saving attempt,  
but I'd rather stay here, lost in the rhythm  
that heals.***

***My heart is open to you, as long  
as you let me sway in the water.  
And open your heart to the pulse  
of the world.***

***Emily Anne Granger***



*Photo by Shayanna Boonie*

## **For J.**

Proud but fading,  
The old dog  
struggles to keep up with the pack.

Seasons earlier, her eyes surveyed all  
With the fiercest gaze.  
Now they are dimming and  
diminished by haze.

Confused eyes cast about  
above a graying muzzle.  
As simple chores and commands  
Now become a puzzle.

Now it is time to rest  
in the sunny spot on the family porch.  
And pass the torch,  
to the younger pups.

**By Dr. Chris Tipping**

*He might be long overdue but I don't care.*

*I can't pry your hushed brooding eyes from my nightmares after the shock of your fingers over mine and how there was this tug, intense, the world shifting back to its correct angle on its axis after he pushed it over, and the jerked surprise of my gaze for a second, only a second, this slight smile piquing your mouth, and everything holding me in place snapped, released, plummeted away from me except for your quiet palm over my knuckles, and how the silent gasp of my existence chased back to surround me again as your hand dipped away from mine and his voice lifted, and I had to sit down with my stomach tousled like your hair. I used to wait for his laugh, but there's that brilliant spark of yours, easy and warm, at my words, and you say my name, ordinary, just a scuff of sound, but I perk up at the stroke of your voice, the laze of your stare on mine for a moment, always just a moment, but it's enough. I want to fall asleep accidentally on the couch in the crook of your arm that hasn't wrapped around me yet, and he doesn't know, and they don't know, and you don't know, because even though you're his best friend, no one knows where I stand with him.*

*I want to stand with you, though.*

*Sam Navarro*



## Feather from Oriental

I was born to be a feather in the breast of a hen  
As she ruffles on the roost  
In congregation in the laying shed  
Under the stars way up above the slanting hill behind them  
And the farmer leaves the fireside to come out to the blackness  
He breathes in smoke and frost and breathes out mist  
I'm downy as an owl's wing  
I'm cleaner than your Sunday clothes  
I'm quiet and content as the door is closed for nighttime  
I was born to be a feather in the breast of a hen  
I was born to be a feather on the wind

I was born to be a feather on the weathered block of wood  
Stuck in an axe groove, and glued with blood  
Shudders, eyes averted  
From the lost art and the strangeness  
For the axe is inefficient and the block is far from sterile  
But the butcher passes by me and his face reflects a smile  
No undue pleasure at the job he does  
But rather at remembrance of another job well done  
The world walks wide around us yet again  
A world that would not love his guilty hand  
I was born to be a feather on the weathered block of wood  
I was born to be a feather on the flood

I was born to be a feather in the tail fan of a tom  
As he struts and spits for hens  
And his beard drags in the morning snow  
He grows and lives for several years, but I  
I stay for only one year, see the seasons going round  
Complement his fine display turned back and forth  
When summer comes I'm gone again, but it matters very little  
For alone I'm just a feather, break with time and fade with weather  
It's the bird that matters in the end  
My life just gives him cover, flash or flight  
I was born to be a feather in the tail fan of tom  
I was born to be a feather here and gone

# Rainstorm

2006

Girl:

~Chorus 1~

You don't know how much I've missed you  
You haven't seen the tears I've cried  
I've been wishin' I could be with you  
Since you left my side

But we're over, I know  
Things won't be like before  
Yet I still can't let you go  
I can't close that door

~Bridge 1~

And they say it's great getting closer  
But in the end, it only hurts  
Our love is like a rainstorm  
And it only gets worse

~Chorus 2~

And you don't know how much I've missed you  
You haven't seen the tears I've cried  
And I just wish that I could kiss you (oh baby)  
One last time  
One more day is all I ask for

One last chance to be in your eyes  
I have to hold you once more  
Can never say goodbye

Boy:

I can never say goodbye  
I should be carrying you  
I don't want to see you cry  
But there's nothing more that I can do

~Bridge 1~

And they say I've found something greater  
That I'm in a better place  
But I would trade all Heaven and Earth  
If only to see your face  
To feel your embrace

\*Repeat Chorus 2\*

Girl: You know I can't live without you

Boy: And I can't find the light

Girl: there's no one here to pull me through

Both: But no way to bring the dead back to life

\*Repeat Chorus 2\*

~ Let's get rid of the Rainstorm

And never say

Goodbye ~

Kalina Desseaux

*Take my hand, run with me through the fields and woods of  
my memories, past trees who silently try to remember for me.  
Watch as the houses go up behind us, knocking them to their  
aged knees, forever the unwanted growth of society will rise,  
covering my experiences. Laying them down to sleep beneath  
the foundations. Hibernation near the heart of the mountain.  
Until thoughts struggle back, giving breath to rekindle the  
dying flame. Phantom children run through old forests past  
the ghosts of unseen trees. She feels their footfalls and rests easy  
knowing that someone is at least trying to  
remember her majesty.*

*By Lauren Smith*

*Photo by Megan Brown*

# *Sleep*

*Bed beckons me with soft lullabies  
With a dreary head and droopy eyes.  
To come leave the real world far behind  
And enter a dreamland that is much more kind.*

*It's a strange place that's filled with the most wondrous of things  
Where fantasies come true, whatever mayhem it brings.  
From wrestling alligators to saving best friends,  
The adventure from dreamland never ends.*

*Skateboarding moose, flying toasters, and much much more  
Don't ever seem to make sense, but they never bore.  
Seeing loved ones that have already passed,  
The awesomeness of dreamland is unsurpassed.*

*I have yet to have a single nightmare.  
That term is reserved for only the despair  
Of the real world.  
Waking up is the only thing to dread,  
But life is but a dream for the dead.*

*Now it is time for me to sleep  
Each bizarre dream is mine to keep.*

*Samantha Kelly*



## *Infinity*

*My determination is unstoppable, I will succeed, I will achieve, I will shut my opponents down. Even when I'm on the bridge about to break I will crush them and come back on top. It will be something that you wouldn't believe is possible, a comeback. You can not escape your inevitability, "you want what I have and you can't have it, so you fight for it, you try to mislead me, you want to be my inamorata? Sorry, I don't take in that easily, haven't before and don't plan on it now! Let's have relations. Just joking! Do you really think I would have them with you? Don't flatter yourself, it'll get you nowhere in life. I'm the fashion setter, yet, you don't believe me. Watch, in a few weeks, what I say, do, and wear will be around the school. I was made to come out on top. I told you baby, it's my determination, and it'll never stop, even when I die, you all will still worship me and my being*

*Kristen Weaver*



# “Puzzle”

I thought puzzles came with every piece  
Thus easy for one to do.  
Yet my two piece puzzle had one missing.  
Until a September welcomed you.  
My heart, alone, not sufficient  
There are certain things I need.  
Every craving, every desire  
Your heart seems to feed  
Nineteen years, I had words  
Yet no one to receive  
Beginning to consider forfeit  
Then you made me believe  
From the blonde hair on your head  
To your ticklish toes and feet  
I love it all so much  
You make me feel complete  
Connecting pieces are obvious  
And appealing when put together  
So stay attached, stay connected  
Let us be complete forever

John Giusti

1st Place, Literature Prize Winner





## **"Fallen"**

**I took your money from the drawer  
You didn't seem to miss it  
I seemed to need it more  
I took the keys to my dad's car  
I stole the alcohol  
My friends drank, it killed them all**

**I see the bottles on the ground  
I feel the pain swell up  
Tears of silence all around  
If anyone should ever ask  
I'll clench my fists and point  
The blame at others in my past**

**I've fallen farther than you think  
Not a day goes by I don't regret it all  
I've fallen farther than you know  
Feel free to hold my hand in Hell  
Just don't forget to let me go**

**I was walking through the rain  
I was watching you that day  
My intentions I'm not sure  
I can't take this anymore**

**Every corner that you turn  
I'll be all your mind concerns  
They will see me in your face  
I won't rest until you break  
It's too late**

**I've fallen farther than you think  
Not a day goes by I don't regret it all  
I've fallen farther than you know  
Feel free to hold my hand in Hell  
Just don't forget to let me go**

**Steven Sheets**

**2nd Place, Literature Prize Winner**

## *The Rose You Deserve*

*The sky turns to silver glass.  
As Springtime rains go rolling past.  
And through the mist and haze I saw.  
The one thing to make my whole world fall.*

*You gave up, you turned your back.  
Tolerance for change is what you lacked.  
But opportunity still sits at your door.  
Because he knows you can have something more.*

*Something better than tears every night.  
Someone who sees you in a better light.  
Plunge into a place that you never dared.  
And just forget the world is there.*

*For it's not a perfect world in which we dwell.  
Lucifer was an angel before he fell  
Broken hearts and angry lies,  
Cause the roses in the garden to all die.*

*But come Springtime, those roses will begin life anew.  
As love always blossoms under skies of blue.  
If I'm not ready when God throws me the curve,  
I hope someone gives you the rose you deserve.*

*Jeffrey Sennett*

*3rd Place, Literature Prize Winner*

Forgiven  
I have broken  
Your heart  
That you gave so willingly

And you probably  
Never thought I  
Would,

Forgive me,  
It was just too easy  
And I'm  
Just so cold

Jennifer Madden

# Unnamed

I miss the smell of horses  
when we used to ride-  
leather saddles squeaking  
and smelling in the burnt sun  
sweat melting,  
sticking to the horses and ourselves-  
sweet stench of summer  
where clover grows.

Wild and green blades waving,  
hayfields, corn, beans, and long  
furrows of red earth  
where the plow sunk.  
Horses' hooves leave prints in soft earth.  
Love grew fresh in blossoms  
from my heart in the ground.

Every year the plants come up,  
fresh foliage from new seeds.  
But the red rare earth bleeds  
new blood from old wounds  
rubbed raw each spring,  
Old memories and songs-  
Like you in the morning on your John Deere  
And that old Carhart jacket  
that hangs in the barn.

I want to ride by sometime  
to see the long gravel lane leading

*to the barn, the pastures  
and the farmhouse.  
But something keeps me always away-  
And then my heart rips  
out of the ground  
into my throat somewhere.*

*I miss the smell of horses  
when we used to ride-  
your chewing tobacco, moustache  
and cowboy hat-  
Wrangler jeans and rope,  
the sideways smile,  
scent of Polo cologne,  
even that old black and white pick-up  
and your Queensland blue heeler.*

*Eight years could be eight lives,  
Eight eternities keeping us apart,  
Tormenting me from time to time,  
Slipping away, always coming back-  
Like coming back home  
after a long time away.  
You can smell the horses  
when they're outside,  
and hear the squeak of leather  
from the barn door.*

*Carol Tufano-Morrison*

For Daddy

I watch you sleep in eternal peace.  
My ear throbs and my voice trembles.  
Whispering in your ear  
gives comfort knowing you can hear.

Love sleeps near, never have I seen so strong.  
Much is silent, a distant sound.  
Your breaths are even and real,  
but not from your own strength.

My mind wanders to days gone past.  
I know you must be near,  
unable to touch nor fear.  
Reach out and hold me in your  
loving arms.  
If only you could hear.

Emily Anne Granger



*Photo by Jessica Moore*

I know my mistakes, I see my flaws  
It's easier said than done, that is all  
I'll show you my worth, I swear you'll see  
Hell, give me a tree to choose from  
I'll find a new leaf  
Everyone deserves second chances  
Thirds, fourths, and fifths  
Don't give up on me yet  
My loyalty will shine though  
I'll bite my tongue  
Curb my anger  
Draw the leash tight on my pride  
Just show me a forest, pick out a tree  
I'll find a new leaf to turn over  
You will see.

Laura Smith

Love can be so boring...  
It was with him  
but not with you.  
Not yet.  
Like a desert he only gave me an oasis  
every once in a while  
And that was the way it went.  
That was the way it was.  
Stale cookies, a vague hint of something good  
ruined by time.  
Bland.  
Except when he wanted excitement,  
then he blazed and I was the fuel.  
I wasn't something he loved.  
He didn't love. I thought I did.  
And he wanted me or so he said.  
It seemed no one else did  
so I was there with him...  
but not with you.  
Not yet.  
There was no claim.  
So when your eyes met mine  
and I stopped breathing  
I panicked.  
Wasn't I supposed to be his?  
He wasn't mine.  
Flighty, wide eyed, confused.  
You were patient.  
You were kind.  
You blazed steady and beautiful.  
He stopped being so brilliant  
and wonderful and the only one who seemed to care  
Slowly, slowly, I was free  
but not with you  
Not yet.  
Now there's this feeling  
new, startling, different  
You.  
Love can be so boring.  
But not with you.

Lela Berger







Photo by Roger Smith



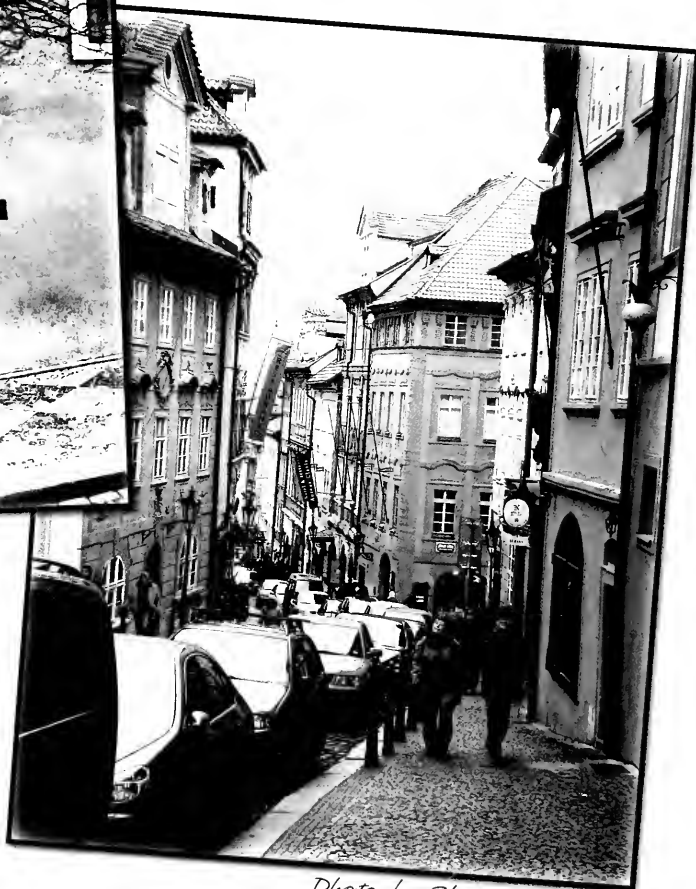
*Painting by Emire Mullarley*



*Photo by Jessica Moore*



*Photo by Shayanna Boonie*



*Photo by Shayanna Boonie*



*1st Place Art  
Painting by Kelsey Krammer*



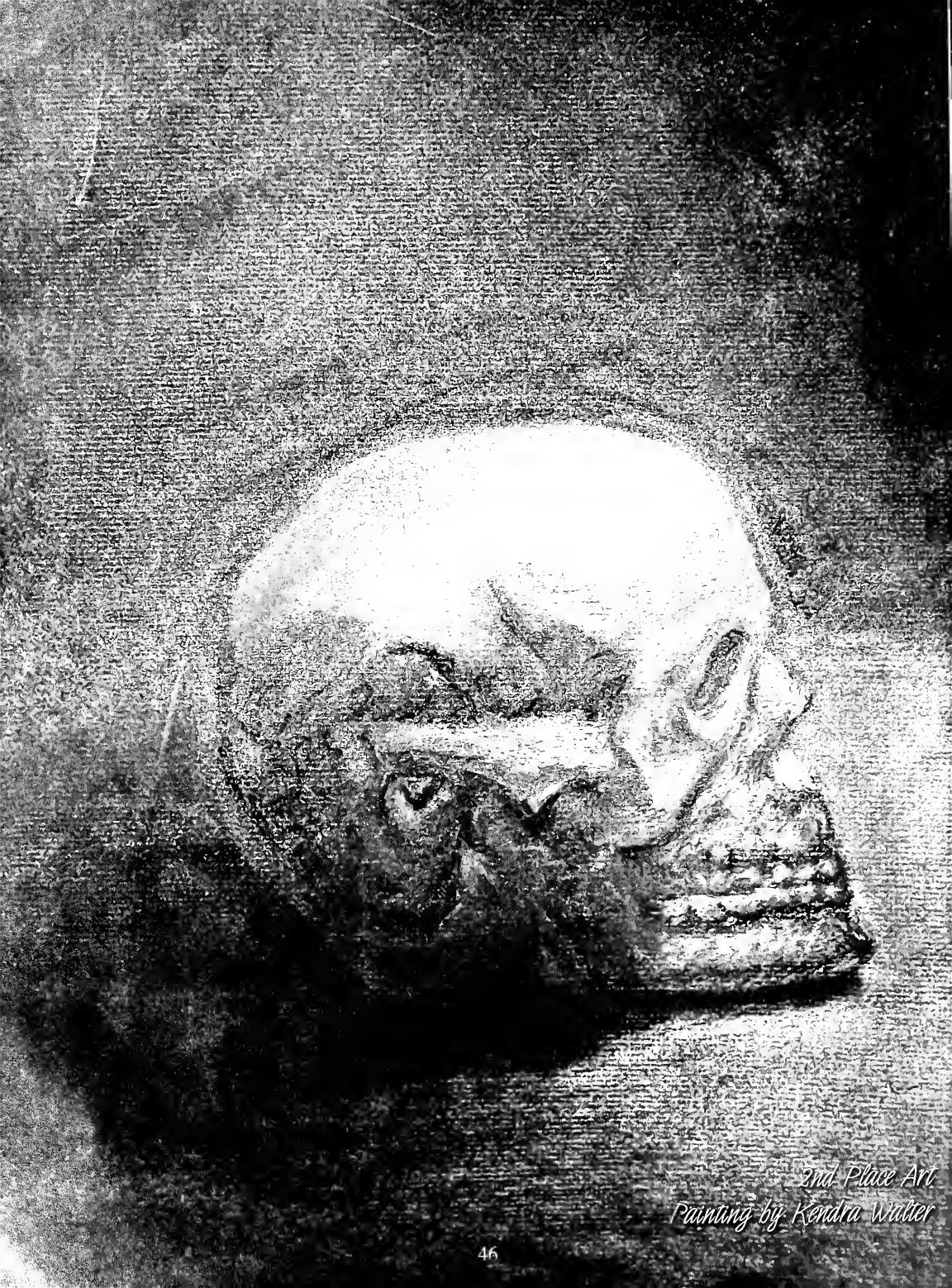
*Painting by Ashley Decker*





# Research

THE CHINESE ART  
OF THE WISDOM



*2nd Place Art  
Painting by Kendra Walter*



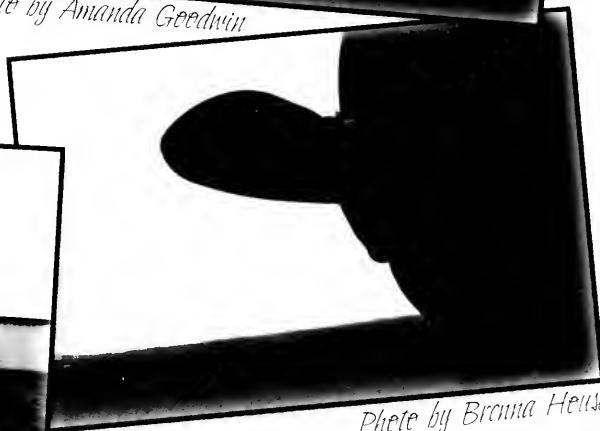
*Photo by Danielle Friedrich*



*Photo by Amanda Goodwin*



*Photo by Brenna Heuse*



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*Photo by Maria Cramer*



*Photo by Paige Seitz*





*Photo by Michael Torgernick*

# shackles

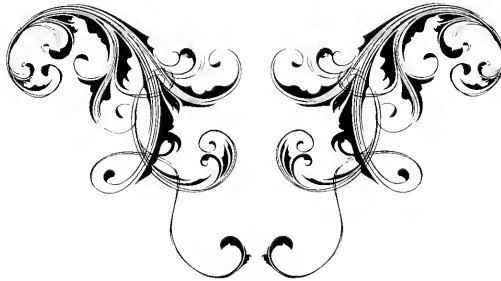
My body is not me  
It is but a shackle on my soul  
A physical shell for others to look at  
But on that shackle there is a chain  
It allows me to wander  
To explore the realm of the unseen  
A place where souls can go  
For temporary escape  
And there I search  
For other souls  
Then follow their chains  
One by one  
Back to their shackles  
Looking for one  
Better than mine  
One I can long for  
One that defines my soul  
And as soon as I see it  
I reach the end of the chain  
I'm tugged backwards  
But one day  
My chain will rust and break  
As well as the other one I found  
And then I will find a new chain  
And meet the shackle that defines my soul  
In the realm of the unseen  
And we shall be as one  
My new shackle and I  
But still  
My body is not me  
It is but a shackle on my soul

Adam Zimmerman



OUR FRAGILE WORLD TEEMS WITH LIFE;  
SPAWNED BY COMPETITION AND CONSTANT STRIFE.  
THE INFINITE MORPHOLOGICAL COMBINATIONS,  
ARE PRODUCTS OF GENETIC VARIATION.  
GENETIC PLASTICITY MOLDED BY SELECTION.  
ALL LIFE IS GOVERNED BY THE RULES OF THE BIOLOGICAL CONSTITUTION  
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS EVOLUTION.

DR. CHRIS TIPPING



## Leaving

If this night were a poem  
I could feel its breath upon my fingers  
as its words caress the paper  
I could hear the sounds of leaves  
brush my hair  
and smell the wind  
along the lines.

If all my yesterdays were poems  
I could save them,  
fold them in little squares  
and keep them in my pocket  
and on lonely nights like this  
I could take them out  
for company.

But there are no more poems  
to soothe my spirit  
to hold my body  
and to save me from the loneliness  
between these lines.  
The poems will be gone  
when I leave this place,  
only words will remain.

Carol Tufano-Morrison

## The Wood

Walking through the wood  
Drenched in crumbled consequence  
Looking where you should  
Avoiding unknown relevance  
A case you couldn't solve  
No one will ever see it  
The background seems to fade  
You don't think you believe it  
Maybe you'll just dream it

Looking toward the stars  
Images, they form around  
You know not where you are  
Yet you know you're safe, you're sound  
You took this path too far  
No one will ever see it  
The background seems to fade  
How could they believe it?  
Maybe they'll just dream it

Walking through the wood  
Full of new-found confidence  
Looking where you should  
Taking in life's elegance  
A case you couldn't solve  
No one will ever see it  
The background seems to fade  
You're not sure you believe it  
One day you will dream it

Steven Sheets



## Keep it Moving; Use it!

Soon after I joined the Cadillac-LaSalle Club I read with interest a question submitted by a reader/member whose 6-volt battery required recharging, and that every two years he needed to buy a new battery. I believe the suggestion was made to drive the car more frequently. That is good advice. I was somewhat disappointed by the question because I was looking for a 1953 sedan—the first year of the 12-volt battery for the very reason of his concern.

It made me reflect that on the strawberry farm in Oregon where I grew up, all our Allis Chalmers tractors, Chevy cars, and trucks were powered by 6-volt batteries; they always started and ran well. I also reflected on my first car—a 13-year-old 1950 Cadillac sedan—which I drove from Oregon to South Carolina to college, and drove weekly at college, and the battery never failed.

Pity the car that emerges from the garage only at show times and needs to have the battery charged, and when the car starts, it emits blue smoke for a few minutes. "Use it or lose it" applies to many things. So does paying attention to small things with our cars.

But the most recent car I found was a 1952 sedan—the last year of the 6-volt battery and the 50th anniversary car.

- 1 fuel filter clogging. Change it.
- 2 oil filter and air bath cleaner; change it/clean it frequently.
- 3 generator light comes on while driving; add a new voltage regulator.

I invite my mechanics to tech seminars run by Cadillac-LaSalle Club and RROC. This is a congenial way to find out some tricks of the trade and educate younger mechanics how to keep these old machines running. As I drive by the garage and toot the horn, the mechanic smiles to see his handiwork still hauling me and covering asphalt.

A set of 4 Michelin radial tires—225 x 15—keeps it rolling down the highway as if it's on a bubble, and the power steering makes handling the car as nimble as it does on my modern vehicle. One push on the accelerator sets the choke and the car starts on the first turn of the key. I use it as a backup or sometimes daily driver. It is not a showpiece because the original paint is fading and the temporary grille is waiting to be replaced by the re-chromed one. What is left of the car is definitely "Cadillac," and in Eastern PA where it travels, it attracts attention of the curious with some offers to buy it. It goes from point A to point B and back to A quite well.

The old resistors in the radio were replaced by modern ones and the original radio plays loudly and clearly and the Selector works well with the new manual 6-foot antenna. Oh, yes, brakes, master cylinder, cleaning the journals of gunk, 4-core radiator upgrade, having the transmission rebuilt and more have made driving relatively trouble free. Now if I could just have the gas tank fuel sending unit fixed so that I can fill the tank without gas weeping out where the screws are. Should have never messed with it to begin with.

Dr. Richard C. Ziemer



## Life's Lessons for All Ages:

Today, I witnessed the funeral and burial of a friend. Within me lies the terrible void left by loved ones. Yet, I sit in wonder by what one soul can leave behind. Death came within a two-week period to him. It was amazing, so I thought, how he used the last moments of his life to give living gifts to so many.

After being diagnosed with a life threatening disease, he made a choice to die on his own terms. I believe everyone thought he had a little more time than was determined by a higher power. He has left behind not only his wife, children and grandchildren but a niece who had a special place in his heart and many family members and friends. I, as a friend, received as a gift the insight of a man I've known for over 50 years. He was eulogized by many, including his six grandchildren.

His youngest grandchild, age 10, described a Zadye (grandfather) who gave gifts of himself to share with him. All spoke of the personal letters eventually known as the "Lew letters" they received often from him telling them about his day, his life and how important it was to him to remember to value life with goodness based on deeds, not things bought with money. When a grandson wanted a bookcase built in his bedroom, Zadye came with all the necessary items and tools to build it. But, he didn't do it. Instead, he was remembered for that particular moment when he taught his grandson how to do it himself with the guidance of his Zadye by his side. He left them all knowing how much they were loved and how much they meant to him. Because of his caring and openness while he lived, he also received the embraces of love returned. He went to his resting place with the knowledge that he was adored and that all his life's messages will be carried on by those that still walk the road of life. He received his eulogies every day of his life. What a blessing!

In my opinion, it is never too late to learn. Lessons of life come in different venues. One never knows what the environment of the heart and soul can absorb by allowing one's self to be open to listen and respond in kind. Today, I watched the burial of a friend. But, I walked away from a time of sadness with an even greater respect for a man I thought I knew for over 50 years. The caring, warmth and understanding of who he was remains vital for all tomorrows.

In my opinion, it is of the utmost importance to treat all who walk with you through your journey in life with a kindness you want remembered. Don't wait for that special moment; it may be too late.

Valerie Fiergang

LATE NIGHT THOUGHTS  
I'M STANDING STILL  
I'M SILENT IN FEAR  
I'M SCREAMING "HELP"  
BUT NO ONE CAN HEAR

I'M FADING AWAY  
I'M LOSING MY GRIP  
I THINK I LET GO  
BUT I JUST WON'T ADMIT

I'M USING DENIAL  
TO PRETEND I'M OK  
IT'S THE ONLY WAY  
TO GET THROUGH THE DAY

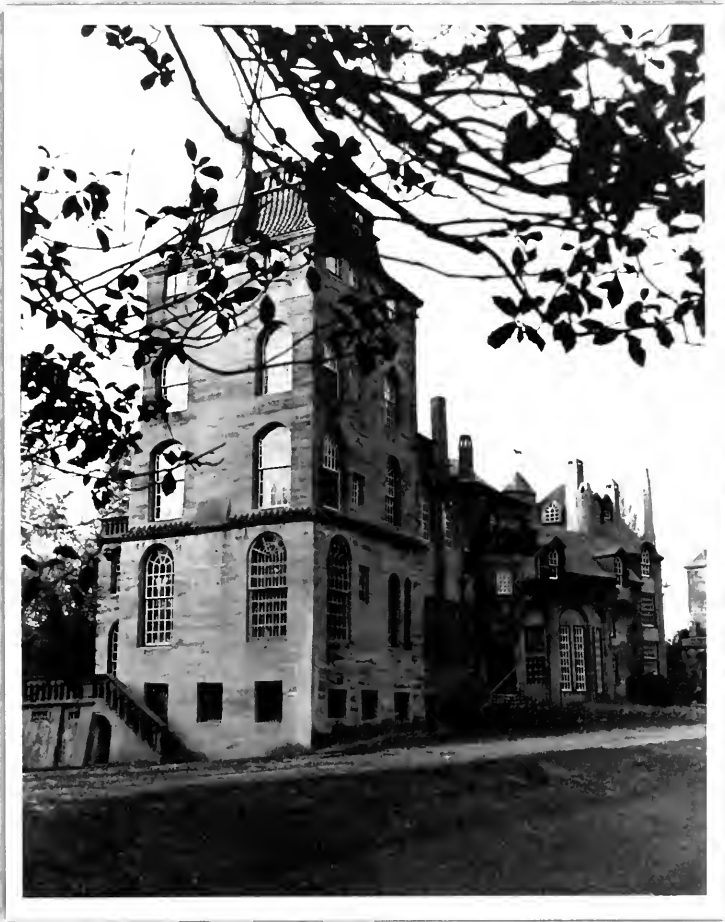
CAN'T MAKE IT ALONE  
USED TO BE STRONG  
USED TO BE HAPPY  
BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG

TOO SCARED TO STEP FORWARD  
TOO SCARED TO STEP BACK  
CAN'T USE THE STRENGTH  
THAT I ALREADY LACK

I'M BLINDED WITH PAIN  
I'M NOT SEEING CLEAR  
I'M BLINDED BY YOU  
AND THESE ENDLESS TEARS

WISH I COULD GET YOU  
OUT OF MY HEAD  
I WISH I COULD REST  
AND JUST GO TO BED

NANCY DAVENPORT



*Photo by Emily Berg*

winded wolf whimpers  
mark over windows  
as you stare past the moon  
tilt your throat  
sidestep their restrictions  
you're beautiful  
you know how to mix drinks  
you play zombie videogames  
you don't mind if he smokes a cigar  
but you're not beautiful like her  
her long light hair  
her slender body  
her strapless dress  
keep your gaze over the horizon  
don't lose sight of the things that  
make your eyes crinkle  
make your heart race  
make your tongue swell  
you're beautiful  
even as you cry

*Sam Navarino*

what's it like to have me in the palm of your hand?  
Mushy like putty and in your command.  
what is it about that sweet and genuine smile,  
That makes me feel as if I could run five miles?

I'd like us to trade places, just for a day.  
That way you'd know how it hurts when you walk away.  
And how I'd do anything, anything just for you.  
Just to be able to see that smiling face.

If I should die before I wake,  
That'd be just my luck.  
I have a fear of dying.  
Not because I'm scared of death,  
But because I know it would disappoint you.

I like you so much it tears me into two  
But I fear there is nothing left to do.  
I want to be with you always from now till forever  
But it seems as if we were not meant to be together.

This was over before it ever began,  
This love is certainly not according to plan.

*Samantha Kelly*



## THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL IS:

LIKE THE THRILL OF BEING THE ONLY ONE ON A BACK COUNTRY ROAD AND WEAVING JUST TO BREAK THE LAW BECAUSE IT'S A SAFE ILLEGALITY. OR HEARING THE FIRST RUMBLE OF A THUNDERSTORM AND NOT BEING ABLE TO KEEP THE SMILE OFF YOUR FACE. IT'S LIKE THE FIRST TIME YOU TASTE WARM APPLE PIE A LA MODE, THE BITE OF CINNAMON AND THE TARTNESS OF THE APPLES AND THE FLAKY CRUST LIKE SOMETHING YOU'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE. OR WHEN YOU PASS THAT TEST YOU COULD SWEAR YOU FAILED OR THE WAY YOU HEAR A PLANE BEFORE YOU SEE THAT TELL TALE WHITE TRAIL ACROSS THE BRIGHT BLUE SKY. IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU HEAR THE ICE CREAM TRUCK AND YOU'RE 20 YEARS OLD BUT YOU SCREAM AND RUN FOR THE CHANGE JAR AND SPRINT OUT THE DOOR TO CATCH HIM BEFORE THE MUSIC IS ALLOWED TO FADE OR, WHEN YOU GIVE UP SOMETHING YOU WANTED BECAUSE YOUR SISTER WANTED IT INSTEAD.

IT'S THE FEELING YOU GET WHEN YOU REALIZE THAT THE PERSON NEXT TO YOU IS DANCING IN THEIR CAR TOO, YOU LAUGH AND FEEL CONNECTED WITH A STRANGER JUST FOR THOSE MOMENTS. OR WHEN YOU GET A BIRTHDAY CARD FROM YOUR DOG WHILE AT COLLEGE AND IT WARMS YOU TO KNOW YOUR FAMILY LOVES YOU THAT MUCH. IT'S THE WAY YOU'RE AFRAID TO LAUGH FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN YOU'RE AROUND HIM OR HOW YOUR HANDS CLENCH AT THE SEAT OF THE ROLLER COASTER RIDE AND THEN THEY'RE IN THE AIR MOMENTS LATER. OR WHEN YOU IGNORE EVERYONE ELSE'S ADVICE TO DO WHAT YOU WANT BECAUSE YOU WANT TO BE WITH HIM AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS. IT'S THE MIX OF EMOTIONS YOU GET WHEN YOU HEAR A GOOD SONG BUT IT'S SO SAD.

LIKE THE FEELING OF COMPANIONSHIP YOU GET WHEN IT'S JUST YOU AND YOUR ROOMMATE IN YOUR ROOM AND THE SILENCE IS SO LOUD IT'S DEAFENING BUT YOU BOTH LIKE IT SO NEITHER OF YOU SPEAKS BECAUSE IT'S NOT NECESSARY. OR COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR BEST FRIEND ACROSS THE TABLE USING ONLY YOUR EYES AND EXPRESSIONS AND KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT SHE'S SAYING AND EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE SAYING BACK. IT'S LIKE THE WAY CATS HIDE THEIR NOSES UNDER THEIR PAWS WHEN THEY SLEEP CURLED UP ON THE SUNBEAM TRACING THE RECTANGLE ONTO THE LIVING ROOM RUG. OR HOW YOUR PUPPY GOES OUT IN THE SNOW AND ROLLS UNTIL SHE'S NO LONGER BLACK BUT WHITE, THE EMBODIMENT OF JOY RUNNING THROUGH THE FALLING CRYSTALLINE FLAKES OR THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN YOU MAKE A PERFECT SNOW ANGEL. IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU START LAUGHING BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE IS, JUST SHARING IN THEIR AMUSEMENT AND HOW ONCE YOU START THEY CAN'T STOP AND YOU CAN'T STOP AND YOU LOSE YOUR BREATH AND GASP FOR AIR BUT YOU LOVE THAT FEELING BECAUSE IT WAS BROUGHT ON BY HAPPINESS OR WHEN YOU FINALLY ACCOMPLISH THAT ONE DREAM THAT WAS ALWAYS KIND OF ACHIEVABLE SO YOU STRETCHED AND THEN IT WAS YOURS.

IT'S THE FEELING YOU GET WHEN YOUR DAD LETS GO OF YOUR BIKE AND YOU DON'T FALL BUT YOUR TRAINING WHEELS ARE GONE AND THEY'RE SO PROUD YOU DON'T CARE YOU WIPED OUT LESS THAN TWO MINUTES LATER. OR WHEN YOU ASK YOUR BUS DRIVER TO SIGN YOUR YEARBOOK BECAUSE HONESTLY SHE HAD AN INFLUENCE AND THE LOOK OF GRATITUDE ON HER FACE WIPES AWAY ANY EMBARRASSMENT YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN FEELING. IT'S THE WAY YOU ALWAYS THINK ABOUT BITING YOUR LIP BECAUSE HE MENTIONED IT IN PASSING AND NOW IT DRIVES YOU NUTS OR HOW YOU GET IN A CAR WITH FRIENDS AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE ALL ROCK STARS. OR WHEN YOU IGNORE THE RECIPE AND END UP WITH SOME CROOKED LOOKING BAKED GOOD THAT'S NOT QUITE PERFECT BUT DELICIOUS ANYWAY. IT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN YOU DANCE, THE PHYSICAL STRAIN BUT THE COMPLETE MENTAL RELEASE OF NOT THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING BUT YOUR OWN MOVEMENT AND THE BEAT OF THE MUSIC.

LIKE THE PLACE YOU GO WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING AN INSTRUMENT AND IT'S NOT JUST PLAYING ANYMORE, IT'S LIVING THE MUSIC. OR THE FEELING OF SHOWERING, SAVORING THE ALONE TIME AND THE PATTERN OF THE WATER AND THE SMELL OF THE SHAMPOO CURLING AROUND IN THE STEAM, COATING THE MIRROR AND FOGGING YOUR SELF-IMAGE. IT'S LIKE THE WAY YOU FEEL AS THE PLANE TAXIS DOWN THE RUNWAY AND YOU KNOW YOU'RE ABOUT TO TAKE OFF AND YOU'RE STARING OUT THE WINDOW, HARD, WAITING FOR THE FEELING OF FLIGHT THAT YOU KNOW IS APPROACHING. OR HOW YOU FEEL AT THE TOP OF EVERY SWING ON THE SWING SET, THE ELATION, THE FREEDOM, LIKE SINGING, OR THE TIME YOU WENT THE WRONG WAY UP THE DOWN ESCALATOR, LAUGHING THE WHOLE TIME AND ALMOST TRIPPING ON EVERY STEP BECAUSE YOU'RE A NATURAL KLUTZ. IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU LOOK EVERYWHERE FOR YOUR PENCIL AND IT'S BEHIND YOUR EAR THE WHOLE TIME AND YOUR FRIENDS JUST WATCHED, AMUSED WHILE YOU GOT CRAZIER AND CRAZIER OVER SOMETHING SO SIMPLE OR THE WAY YOUR STOMACH FEELS WHEN HIS FINGERS SUDDENLY ENTANGLE WITH YOURS WITHOUT WARNING AND YOU FORGET TO INTAKE AIR FOR THE NEXT FEW MOMENTS.


IT'S THE FEELING YOU GET WHEN YOUR SISTER CALLS YOU TO TELL YOU SHE GOT THIRD PLACE AT HER HORSE SHOW AND YOU'RE SO IMPRESSED WITH HER YOU'RE GRINNING LIKE THE CHESHIRE CAT AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE STARING AT YOU SO YOU PRACTICALLY SHOUT IT AND THEY ALL CHEER WITH YOU BECAUSE THEY KNOW YOU CAN'T EXPRESS IT BY YOURSELF. OR WHEN YOU SEE AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH OF YOURSELF AND INSTEAD OF PICKING IT APART, YOU WISH YOU WERE BACK THERE AND THE MEMORY REEMERGES AND IT'S SO NICE TO LET GO, TO FALL INTO THE PAST FOR A BIT. IT'S THE WAY YOU LOOK FOR HIM IN THE CROWDS EVEN THOUGH YOU KNOW HE ISN'T AROUND OR HOW YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SEE THAT ELDERLY COUPLE HOLDING HANDS AS THEY WALK IN THE PARK, AN UNHURRIED PORTRAIT OF THE TIMELESSNESS OF LOVE AND PATIENCE. YEAH, THAT FEELING.

THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL IS ALL OF THIS AND YET, IT'S BEYOND DESCRIPTION.

LELA BERGER

*The violin screams of leaves  
as they spiral through the wind  
licking deer's ankles in their path  
my voice cracks  
like your collarbone  
how you had withered in the dirt  
your savior  
the arterial blood nail polish  
and the fox whimpers caught  
your smirk lost in the distance  
the tilt of your neck  
you sigh  
heavy and filled  
the rabbit thump of fingers  
over the plum of your cheek  
and your eyes close  
only for a moment  
before his antlers stir a branch  
and respiration begins again.*

*Sam Navarino*



Modern day princess  
Off to dream up a fairy tale of a  
handsome prince on a white steed in gleam-  
ing tack coming to ask for my permission to  
continue on saving me from unnamed foes,  
questioning my opinion of whether we shall  
take the left fork or the right

Laura Smith





*Photo by Shayanna Boonic*

## *Conformity*

*I took a walk today  
I saw disgusting things  
Fear to fail, or to succeed  
Anxiety it brings*

*Kids conversed, as if rehearsed  
Parents in their way  
Words are heard, unregistered  
Saved for another day*

*Leave the pencils on the desk  
The books upon the shelf  
If what is taught you find grotesque  
Then educate yourself*

*I took a walk today  
I saw disgusting things  
Lives lived so indifferently  
The apathy it brings*

*Read the nonexistent signs  
Step back, observe, it's not a crime:  
Cars go by on painted lines  
Drawn by conformists over time*

*To go unheard is quite absurd  
Don't wait another day  
Run, transcend, and don't pretend  
You're nothing else to say*

*Steven Sheets*

## Stay

I love the way the wind twirls the autumn leaves, decaying and crunchy, across the asphalt. I love the way the house smells while Thanksgiving dinner is coming together like a beautifully conducted orchestral piece. I love the sound of your voice. I love the way you sound when you tell me you love me. I love it when you want me to understand how much you mean it and how the butterflies in my stomach never really settle, even though you're ten plus hours away from me and we've been talking for three plus hours tonight. The way you laugh, the way you make me laugh without meaning to and how sometimes I can't even breathe and I just shake my head with the phone pressed to my ear like you can see me and understand even though you can't really and don't and I have to force sound so you know I'm still there, still amused. I listen to the seashell contained waves of your breath curling against my ear and thank the stars, all of them, not just the lucky ones, for letting me pick you off the beach, as it were, and for your consent to that choice. I have never talked to anyone like this, listening to anyone's breathing and been content. I nearly cried with you on the phone tonight just because I knew you'd understand why but I couldn't because you wouldn't have been there to hold me and I knew, instinctively like how ants know where their hill is, that fact above everything else would just eat away at you inside. And I couldn't do that to you, even though I wanted to cry and hear you reassure me. I wanted you to be holding me more. So I swallowed it down but that hurt too because you told me you wanted me to trust you enough to cry in front of you. And all of it nearly came tumbling out. How much I worry that maybe I'm wasting your time, I do love you, I do but what if? What if? And you're older and you're so busy and what if I'm taking up your time and you're supposed to be with someone else right now, not me? And how much you love me scares me sometimes. I need you, I've never felt like this about anyone but it's so fast and sure and it makes it seem like it can't be real. I do trust you. You know so much more about me, more than any of those other guys combined, you know the right things to say and how to push my buttons already and get me pissed off but not truthfully, just enough that you're teasing, just enough that I know you are but I can't help my bristle, that response. Boy, you are like the stories from my childhood, those old songs I know all the words to, the way I like to lie right before I fall asleep. You're my stuffed animals and the posters on my walls. You're the way family comes together or how to prepare the Thanksgiving turkey, the way the cranberry sauce always comes to me first because it's a constant battle between my father and I. And like the dull roar of the conversation or the way the pie crust crumbles under the knife, the old tired teasing arguments or the stuffing that I made this year which still tastes just like my mother's, like all of these memories, all the familiarity, you're right there already. Stay.

Lela Berger

*To Katherine*

*It was an hour too late*

*A hundred miles too far*

*She couldn't catch a plane*

*Couldn't drive a care*

*So she had to wait*

*For him to call*

*But it's already been three days*

*And she hasn't heard from him at all*

*~ Bridge 1 ~*

*And she's starting to wonder*

*~ Chorus 1 ~*

*Where are you now?*

*Where have you gone?*

*Don't you remember how*

*We were so in love?*

*I always ask myself*

*Don't you want to stay in-touch*

*Have you forgotten all about us*

*Where are you now?*

*No matter how it hurt*

*She'd always wait for him*

*She would never turn  
She was already taken  
How willing was she  
To wait so long*

*'Cause now it's been three weeks  
And she's heard nothing at all  
~ Bridge 2 ~*

*And she wonders  
\*Repeat Chorus\*  
~ Bridge 3 ~*

*And all this time  
She's been waiting for her only one  
But he hasn't answered her cries  
On the past three months  
\*Repeat Chorus\*  
~ It was a year too late  
A hundred million miles too far ~*

*Kalina Desseaux*

## *Take My Word*

*The questions quickly came  
The answers I'm not sure  
Did you feel the same?  
What was I waiting for?  
There's nowhere left to go  
I bet you're leaving soon  
I just hope you know  
I want the best for you*

*What picture can I paint  
For just your eyes to see?  
I pray my words, though faint  
Persuade you differently  
All I ask is that you take  
My word, and penance too  
Even if you do not wake  
The best will come to you*

*We'll talk a while, stay up late  
Within you burns a light  
That manages to penetrate  
The darkest of this night  
What is left when all have gone?  
The pain is something new  
But worry not, I've asked the dawn  
To bring the best to you*

*Steven Sheets*



*Photo by Michelle Landis*

I can't count how many times I have fallen in love.  
And I fell in love with the shore of his fingers against my wrist.  
The twitch of his mouth and the escape of his voice and the way  
he made me think. He is the dream caught in my throat the morn-  
ing after nothing happened. But this song still makes me think of  
you.

And they don't understand.  
But love isn't like that.

It's how you fall in love with her beauty across the street even  
though you'll never see her again. It's the way he laughs quietly  
with his eyes crinkling at the corners. It's because she didn't say  
anything when she found you crying. It's how he sets on the touch  
with his knee touching yours. It's because she's your best friend.  
It's the way he sang into the mic in front of thousands of scream-  
ing fans but you still think it's just for you. It's how she takes  
you out dancing even though you're convinced you can't  
It's the little things. It's the big things. It's the things that will  
never happen. It's the things that make your heart race. It's the  
things that stay locked inside your head. It's the things that  
haunt you even after you've said goodbye.  
It's for as long as he holds your stare. It's for as long as she needs  
you. It's for as long as it takes to drive back to your place without  
him. It's for as long as you can keep your hands on her. It's for as  
long as it takes before you stumble over your words and he takes  
out his cigarette.

Everything is love.

And all that matters is what you feel.

Sam Navarino



*The way Things Were*

when the leaves fall down  
Do you notice all the colors  
On the ground, beneath your feet  
As they lie below  
They beg for your attention  
But you walk away  
You walk away

when the rain falls down  
Do you notice your reflection  
On the ground, it looks your way  
As your image fades  
It begs for your attention  
But you turn away  
You turn away

I want the way things were  
To be the way they'll be tomorrow  
I'm not sure, if I'll be here  
I want the way you are  
To be just how I'll remember  
I'm not sure, if you'll be here

when you look around  
Do you notice all the pieces  
On the ground, just lying there  
The puzzle found  
You've put it all together  
You were bound  
To leave me here

Don't leave me here

I want the way things were  
To be the way they'll be tomorrow  
I'm not sure, if I'll be here  
I want the way you are  
To be just how I'll remember  
I'm not sure, if you'll be here

*Steven Sheets*

*Ange de Mon Rêves  
I confess, I'm a mess  
Another restless night spent wide-awake  
Why dream about you,  
When I can look you in the face?*

*If this is imaginary or not  
The feelings are still very real.  
You're the keeper of my words  
And only you know their meaning.*

*I knew you could fix my shambled heart  
Piece it back together  
It can't be anyone but you  
'Cause you're the only one that makes me happy*

*I'll stare into your baby blues  
And sing  
You're the angel of my dreams  
Who always makes me happy*

*Every second with you is a second well spent  
And every word written about you is with noble intent*

*You're the angel of my dreams  
Who always makes me happy*

*Samantha Kelly*



*Photo by Jen Coe*

## *Christmas Tree*

*I am a Christmas tree  
sacrificial limbs outstretched,  
palms facing upward,  
I feel heavy with ornaments,  
your decorations.*

*My tiny green needles plead  
for mercy. Each day I grow  
tired, so tired, and dry.*

*Take me back to the forest-  
the original soil  
where earth and water  
nourish me.*

*I am your Christmas tree  
still and quiet  
I glow with artificial light  
burning with the silence  
of your material world.*

*Carol Tufano-Morrison*

**"I'm Sorry I"**

**Close your eyes  
Take in all the sounds of night  
I wonder what you're thinking  
Rest at ease  
Simplicity's a simple thing  
Take your time  
Don't get up  
Just listen to me**

**I don't try  
To hurt your feelings, I just  
Speak my mind, I don't deny it  
I can't pretend  
To ignore this, I think  
In the end  
You'll thank me**

**I'm sorry I don't comply  
Please tell me why  
You do this to me  
Push me down, pull me up  
Tell me I'm not good enough  
Well I say hey,  
Look at me, tell me how  
You're such an angel  
I can't see  
I don't know what to believe**

**There are times  
When nothing seems to work out right  
And if you try  
You can rid them from your mind  
All the while  
You disconnect me from your life  
In the end  
I'll thank you**

**I'm sorry I don't comply  
Please tell me why  
You do this to me  
Push me down, pull me up  
Tell me I'm not good enough  
Well I say hey,  
Look at me, tell me how  
You're such an angel  
I can't see  
I don't know what to believe**

**By Steven Sheets**



*The Gleaner*

*High School Writing  
Competition*

The English Department  
is very happy to have sponsored its thirteenth  
high school writing competition,  
which was designed to showcase the work  
of young writers in the area.

## Last

A last blink, taken in a coffee can,  
Or a strawberry jam jar  
ragged punches in the tin lid.  
One last word to the trees,  
The grass, the sweet summer sky.  
Lowered eyelashes to the soft flutter  
Yellow glow against glass  
A short naïve life.

Courage?

As a child rests his head  
a small fly,  
two eyes and two wings  
a gently glittering light,  
lives its life for decay.

As a child rests his head,  
their lullaby shine  
drifts him off to dreams.

Stephanie Chubb  
Pennridge High School  
Grade 11  
Mrs. Kosa



## Two People, Unrecognizable

I watch them; they are waiting for life.  
Scratching their images with my nail,  
I see them as I never have before  
(Is that true?)  
I see them as I've heard in stories.  
Their stolid happiness  
Fixed in her lowered blue eyelids,  
And his bemused slouch, red tie askew  
Their myopic splendor: a wedding of white, black, and silver,  
and my grandmother's  
nauseating wallpaper.  
All of their wakeful dreams – a hope as ridiculous as the image  
before me,  
As lonely as her closed eyes  
My sister in her belly, growing, reminding. Relentless.  
How dazzling the future!  
Their desperate fermented future.  
Soon rabid resentment will close its grip.  
Take off all that white lace; it can't be divided between you and  
him,  
Do not let him wear that awful brown belt on his wedding day,  
Do not snap the photo while her eyes are shut – unaware. They  
will stay that way forever.

There is a heavy trauma trapped within those gifts and the naïve  
fingers loosening the bows.

It wasn't our fault you had no idea,  
In us, there hides no guilt.  
Because we've had this suspicion,  
Whispering,  
We will all go through it too.

Jacquelyn Hamilton  
North Penn High School  
Grade 12  
Ms. Kinsey

## *Katrina: What Really Happened*

*I woke up early on Monday morning; in fact, everyone did. Either that or we never went to bed. It's all a blur exactly what happened because of all the talk that frightened everyone. Not only was it going to be like Hurricane Betsy, but it was going to be worse, much worse. All 10 of us stayed up; all 20 eyes fixed on the television screen with constant coverage of the evacuation and where the hurricane was headed. The fear, constantly in my mother's eyes, was everywhere. We watched as it made landfall at about 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning. Over 50 levees were destroyed, allowing tons and tons of water to cover the entire city. The swells were much larger than anyone had anticipated, and the hurricane's path couldn't have been any worse. It travelled directly up the Pearl River, a river that passed not five miles from my house.*

*The TV would show glimpses of familiar areas, familiar buildings, but everything was ruined. Buildings were flooded and some had simply floated away. People were in total disarray as the coast guard went and tried to rescue people riding out the storm in their homes. The best film was caught that day by the news cameramen and the reporters. A sight I'll never forget was a skinny, middle-aged black man walking around completely lost. He had his hands on his head, and he was looking everywhere for something as they videoed his meandering gait. Tears flowing down his face, he was asked by the reporter what he was doing and if he needed any help. His answer still haunts me and shows the blunt reality most of the nation cannot relate to. He said that he was looking for his son and wife who were in the attic when the water was rising and something had busted a hole. He tried to hold them, but the current was too strong. Hysterical, he told them the story then*

suddenly left, saying nothing but that all he wanted was to find his wife and kid. Everyone in the room watched as this was neither the only sad story nor the saddest story of the day; the stories just kept coming. I remember the look in his eyes and the way that he stumbled around in total shock and agony; he still haunts my dreams.

My parents woke us up early on Thursday so we could make the trek back home so my mom could see the damage for herself and so we could take pictures for insurance. The roads looked fine for the first hour or so and then there was a distinct difference. Trees had fallen everywhere on both sides of the interstate. As we got closer, the big metal signs on the interstate started to become deformed and in some cases completely missing. There was no traffic, of course, because there was nobody on the road. We got off at our exit just like always and got right onto a main road. On the left where there was normally a gas station, there was simply a building. The gas terminals had all blown over, and the roof was completely torn off. It looked like a deserted, rotten old building waiting to be torn down, and so did every other building. On the way to my house we encountered many fallen trees and obstructions blown into the road that had to be passed with caution. At such a young age it's hard to fathom the destruction laid before me. I never thought anything could have done this to any city besides a bomb. That's what it looked like, like a bomb had blown up, and the blast had blown over all the trees and ripped the roofs right off all the houses. My street was no different. We pulled up in front of my house that besides the entire roof of shingles scattered all over the ground had looked fine, fine except for the fully grown pine tree resting itself along my entire roof. We hoped the shingles had just blown off and the tree was just resting and caused

no serious damage, but my parents both knew this was not the case. Inside, the entire house was covered with gray soot from the water that receded mere days earlier. The back room had albums and albums of irreplaceable photos from my childhood and my parents' wedding lying on the floor and ruined by the water. The waterline was two feet above the floor everywhere I looked, and everything under that waterline had to be thrown away. All of the furniture and cabinets and clothes and toys and childhood memories had to be thrown away. None of it could be salvaged, none of it. In my parents bedroom a branch came right down through the ceiling into their bathroom and a portion of the wall was pushed in. All of my stuff and all of my family's stuff had to be trashed. All of our life and everything that was us had to be thrown away. Our entire fence was nonexistent. We didn't know where we were going to live or if we would ever move back to Louisiana. For the next three months my sisters and I stayed with my aunt in Pittsburgh. We only saw our parents two days a month for those three months, and that's just not enough. First Hurricane Katrina tears apart my house and then she tears apart my family. I hope to God it never happens to any town again, but if it does I will know their pain and I will know what they're going through and I will help them like so many helped my family.

Austin Hartley  
Council Rock High School North  
Grade 10  
Mrs. Hall

# HEAT

AS HUMIDITY BREATHED ITS HOT, STICKY BREATH DOWN MY NECK AND RAN ITS GREASY FINGERS THROUGH MY HAIR, I PREPARED MYSELF FOR THE UPCOMING EVENT. THIS DAY, THE DAY THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DAYS OF MY LIFE, WAS BEING DRASTICALLY ALTERED BY THE EXTENSIVE HEAT. IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF MAY AT MY GYMNASTICS STATE COMPETITION AND NO ONE EXPECTED THIS CHANGE IN WEATHER. AS I STOOD AT THE EDGE OF THE FLOOR, AWAITING THE JUDGE'S APPROVAL TO BEGIN, A SINGLE DROP OF SWEAT ROLLED DOWN MY SPINE, MY BODY'S ATTEMPT TO COOL DOWN MY RAGING TEMPERATURE. THE THICK, BLACK, VELVET OF MY SUIT STUCK TO MY SKIN, MAKING ME FEEL CLAUSTROPHOBIC AND TRAPPED. THE FABRIC LINED ITS WAY UP MY ARMS AND AROUND MY TORSO, CONSTRICTING ME, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO BREATHE. OUTSIDE, 98 DEGREES OF HEAT STALKED THOSE ENTERING THE BUILDING, BUT INSIDE THE NON-AIRCONDITIONED GYM WAS A DEADLY 110 DEGREES, THREATENING ME WITH EVERY BREATH I TOOK. SEVERAL FANS ATTEMPTED TO COOL THOSE INSIDE THE GYM BUT THEIR ONLY EFFECT WAS TO BLOW THE HOT, DENSE, AIR AROUND THE STICKY BUILDING. AS I BEGAN MY FIRST ROUTINE, THE HEAT BEGAN TO WIN THE BATTLE. EVEN AFTER DRINKING SEVERAL BOTTLES OF WATER, MY BODY BECAME WEAK, FEELING DEHYDRATED. MY TUMBLING WAS SLOW AND POWERLESS AS I FORCED MY BODY TO FLIP AND TWIST THROUGH THE ALREADY THICK AIR. THIS WAS NOT AN EASY TASK. WHEN I FINISHED MY ROUTINE, MY BODY FELT FRAGILE AND DEFEATED. MY THROAT TIGHTENED AND ITCHED FOR THE COLD, FRESH WATER TO WORK ITS WAY DOWN MY THROAT TO EXTINGUISH THE RAGING FIRE. AS I LOOKED TO THE JUDGES TO SEE MY SCORE, MY SURROUNDINGS BLURRED AS THE WATER VAPOR RAISED,

CREATING A RIPPLED, WATERY EFFECT. ONCE MY EYES WERE ABLE TO MAKE OUT THE NUMBERS MY BODY CRUMBLLED IN DEFEAT. MY NEXT EVENT WAS BEAM, WHERE I WOULD ATTEMPT TO COMPLETE TRICKS ON A FOUR INCH PLANK OF WOOD, FOUR FEET ABOVE THE GROUND. AS I BEGAN MY WARM-UP, MY HANDS AND FEET SLIPPED SEVERAL TIMES OVER THE WET SURFACE. FROM MANY YARDS AWAY, I COULD EASILY MAKE OUT THE CONDENSATION FORMING ON THE TOP AND SIDES OF THE BEAM. SLOWLY, I COULD SEE A SINGLE DROP OF CONDENSATION SLIDE DOWN THE SIDE OF THE BEAM. IT WAS MOCKING ME, LAUGHING AT ME, AS IT WATCHED ME IN SUCH PAIN, LIKE IT KNEW MY NEAR FUTURE, AND HOW IT WILL ALWAYS DEFEAT ME. I LIFTED MY DAMP PONY TAIL OF MY SWEAT DRENCHED NECK, TO GIVE IT AN OPPORTUNITY TO BREATHE. MY HEART FELT AS IF IT WAS BEATING OUT OF CONTROL. THE ALREADY WARM WATER WAS NOT ABLE TO CALM MY SKY ROCKING NERVES. EVERYTHING, ALL SOUNDS AND SIGHTS, WERE DROWNED OUT BEHIND THE SOUND OF MY JUMPING HEART. HANDS SHAKING, LIPS TREMBLING, I BEGAN MY ROUTINE. MY FEET GLIDED OVER THE WET SURFACE OF THE BEAM FRANTICALLY, ONLY WANTING TO ESCAPE MY PANIC. AS I TURNED AND LEAPED OVER THE SMALL AREA, MY TOES GRIPPED WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT, USING EVERY MUSCLE THEY HAD, JUST PRAYING TO STAY ON. ON MY LAST TRICK, THE HEAT TOOK CONTROL. MY FEET SLIPPED OFF THE SIDE AND I PLUMMETED FOUR FEET DOWN. LIKE A TEAR, A SINGLE DROP OF PERSPIRATION SLID DOWN THE SIDE OF MY CHEEK. THE HEAT HAD WON THE WAR.

RACHEL LALA

CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

GRADE 9

MRS. STEPHANIE HARTLINE

## **“A Monochrome Dream”**

Grey.

Blankets of clouds shrouding the sky, concealing the sun  
from the rest of the world.

When they move,  
a meager light shines on all, as glimpses  
of blue velvet sky burst forth.

White.

Fluttering, fluttering  
Flurries of feathery snowflakes,  
Falling soundlessly.  
Miniature snow angels that bless us  
with their grace.  
Coating patched, death-yellow grass,  
hiding their tragic state.

Black.

The garish, skeleton-esque trees  
a deep charcoal black.  
With long, narrow finger branches  
clutching handfuls of snow  
in their weary boughs.  
Desperately waiting for spring to come.

Alise Peckjian

Lower Moreland High School

Grade 10

Dr. Kimberly McGlonn-Nelson

*Larry woke Ncoe last Saturday morning announcing, "yard work." So Ncoe woke Curly, and the three foooges – pardon, I meant fages – went out to the battlefield: the back yard. We were to face off against a large limb that needed to be cut from an elderly oak tree. When I say large limb, the truth is it was a limb so massive that a regular park tree is no comparison. Sages that we are we elected to pull it down.*

*Larry, Curly, and I weighed in on the morning of the fight at a combined total weight of 550 pounds. The limb couldn't possibly have weighed more than nine Astor Cadillac. Our weapon of choice: a nylon clothesline. First, Curly and I needed to toss the rope over The Branch. In our six attempts to accomplish this feat, I managed to get several direct hits, smacking Curly's face twice, tangling the dog once, and whipping myself fiercely.*

*With the rope in position we started to pull. Curly was perfectly able to see out of the one eye not shut by the whipping rope, so Larry told him to watch for any bend in The Branch. To gain the best advantage, and the most leverage, we made sure that the rope was way down the limb. The principles behind leverage worked just as the known laws of Physics predict. When the clothesline snapped, leverage made all the difference. I was thrown only as far as the edge of the yard and not into oncoming traffic.*

*Curly stood looking disdainfully down at us; Larry and I thought about our sore backsides and pulled bits of grass from our teeth. We convened a war conference.*

*"Hey, Larry," Curly offered, "What about the ladder we found at the dump?" Larry jumped on that plan like a flea on a show dog. Why that ladder was in the dump escapes me even now. All except the four bottom rungs were there and the big bow was hardly noticeable when you had it stretched out to the point in the rope where the duct tape held it together. When Larry and I were able to walk again, our elite commando group moved on the garage. Right off, Curly gets all negative and says, "It's not long enough." Kids these days, simply have no imagination. By employing two fifty gallon oil drums as a base, we got the ladder positioned so it was able to reach and had four inches to spare!*

*I started to climb but the Commander says, "No, Ncoe, I should take the risk. Besides, I've worked with chainsaws for years." He begins his ascent. "Ncoe, hold the ladder. The drums are slick, I don't want to fall. And. . ." I can't share what else he said; the buzz of the chainsaw as he climbed upwards swallowed the remaining orders.*

*At first Curly held the right side and I held the left. Larry got all the way to the top before the saw quit on him. Good thing people have two hands. Larry used one hand for holding the saw and one to jerk the starting cord (repeatedly). With the saw running again (finally), Larry, the chainsaw expert, began his cut, from the bottom.*



*The battle of the Stooges versus The Branch went down as follows. Private Curly abandoned his post in second. Letting go of his side of the ladder he moved to my side, complaining about all the sawdust raining into his uninjured eye and fogging his view. I started to remind the Private that this was not a spectator sport, when the branch came to life! Once Commander Larry had cut about two inches into the wood, The Branch transformed. The limb, which had held fast to the tree for hundreds of years, became a multi-ton fly swatter for the giant who dwelled within the tree; and Larry, Curly and I were the flies. Wow, what an arm on that tree! Now, again, physics is a marvel.*

*The Branch became a highly dynamic mobile physics lab. Momentum changed the lovely branch into a killing machine. Still hinged by a few waxy fibers the branch tickled the ground with the lowest twig, and then soared upwards again. Curly and I were brushed aside by a rush of the small branches. As I still had my sight, I watched as the branch flew upwards and then broke completely free. It was now Gravity against the Stooges. For his first move, Gravity threw the limb onto the ladder. The Branch then performed a pirouette in the air, planted itself, very tree like, straight up, with its leaves blowing in the breeze. Had Private Curly not shamelessly abandoned his post, he would have been impaled. The ground troops had narrowly survived.*

*The airborne unit, Larry, remained in peril. As the ladder was smashed by the falling branch, it bucked upwards and out from our beloved Commander's feet. Our Commander was suddenly free of the ladder, the branch, and the ground. Fortunately, Larry is in fact an expert with a chainsaw: with no ladder to hold onto, and the branch cut, he decided he no longer needed the killer-saw either. While waiting for his body to plummet to Earth, Larry hurled the deadly-buzzing-beast-saw into space. Finding his hands to be suddenly available for other tasks, he grabbed the tree: safe on first. The faithful ladder jumped into the air under the force of the branch but then miraculously returned to its post. It landed, still waiting to serve, standing atop the oil drums. The bow in the ladder was a bit more pronounced than before but Larry was provided an escape route.*


*Larry rejoined the ground force. Curly went looking for ice to aid the other eye, which was now swelling nicely to watch its partner. I scanned the roof. Across the lawn the next battle was to be staged: cleaning the gutter.*

*Harry Robinson  
The American Academy  
Grade AA  
Dr. Sharon Traver*

## When the Earth Crumbles

When the earth crumbles,  
I will be in green.  
When the earth crumbles,  
I will be under a willow tree.  
When the earth crumbles,  
My voice will be set free.  
When the earth crumbles,  
I will be the RAIN falling down for the last time.  
When the earth crumbles,  
I will grow into a flower,  
And I will SHINE  
Through each and every heart,  
And I will SPEAK; the earth will SPEAK too,  
And I will SPEAK; the creatures will SPEAK too,  
And I will SPEAK; with all the GOODNESS that  
Is left inside me.  
I will be under a willow tree  
And I will be green,  
My mind filled with words,  
My heart bursting open,  
Light as a feather  
In mid air,  
Pure with the soils  
And grains,  
As the earth crumbles  
Into Dust,  
The wind's last breath comes,  
And the birds chirp their last t-u-n-e.

Angela Urffer  
Pennridge High School  
Grade 11  
Mrs. Kosa

A black and white photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted evergreen trees. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a bright sky. At the bottom of the image, there is a body of water, possibly a lake or a wide river, which reflects the sky and the surrounding landscape. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

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